10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

243 412 ploughing. Almost always they used the small wooden plough, sometimes tipped with iron. I have seen a herd of six or eight buffaloes driven around and around over the muddy ground as a method of preparing it for receiving the seed.

As soon as the rain had softened the ground the rice or, more properly, the paddy would be planted by hand, being poked into the ground with a sharp stick. The Karens invented few tools for their work and did not readily adopt those used by other peoples. They 241 weeded with rude hoes, or with sticks and fingers. As the crop matured, they had to fight many varieties of animals and birds. They would construct rude fences of bamboo to keep out wild pig and deer. To protect themselves from the birds they strung small ropes made of various fibres around the field and attached bamboo clappers and later tin cans or anything that would make a noise. It was the duty of the women or small boys to sit in the central hut where they lived during the time of cultivation and pull these strings to drive away the marauding birds which came in large flocks to get their fill of the succulent, newly-formed rice.

● 251 243 The rice was reaped by hand using a sickle with a long curved handle, and then the grain was beaten out against a bamboo bar fixed to standards set up in the ground. The wind was the winnowing machine. The grain was stored in paddy bins prepared for it until it was needed for supplying the daily table. Often these bins would be located part way between the cultivation and the village site and they were not molested for there [577] is an innate honesty among the Karens that respects that to which they have become accustomed.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

243 the clappers, and clearing the traps. When wild elephants appear in the field, those on guard are unable to do more than produce affrighting noises from a safe distance, in the hope that the great animals will be scared away before they have destroyed the entire crop.

243 As soon as the rains are over in October the hill rice ripens very quickly, and the harvest-time is near. Among some of the people it is the custom for the eldest member of the family to reap a little of the grain as the first fruit, as it were, of the season's produce. After this has been done, the whole family take part in the reaping. (See page 89.) The implement used is a sickle ("xeh"), the long handle of which bends backward from the grip, the tool as a whole having the shape of the letter S. The outer end of the sickle extends under the arm of the reaper, enabling him to cut with greater ease than if he depended only on his wrist muscles. The grain is cut about half-way down the stalks and is tied in small sheaves no larger than can be easily grasped with one hand. Even though all the paddy in the plot could be cut in one day, a fraction is left for reaping until the next morning, in order to have the crop good and make it last longer. The sheaves are thrown into piles, and then collected near the hut, where they are beaten out. In some places the sheaves are beaten over the edge of a trough improvised from half of a hollow log, and in others they are beaten over a horizontal pole tied by withes to two bamboo posts, the pole being about three feet above the ground. A large bamboo mat is spread down under the pole or the trough, as the case may be, to catch the grain. Those who engage in the beating are careful to tie up their wrists and call in the "k'las" or wandering shades. They also deem it necessary to complete the threshing before they leave the place. Both men and women or either alone serve as threshers. When the paddy has all been beaten out, it is winnowed by holding it aloft in a tray or basket and letting it fall, while the wind carries the chaff to one side and the grain falls on the mat. (See page 91.) The grain is now ready to be stored in a bin built in the field or along the path leading to the village. In the districts inhabited only by Karens these bins are to be found along the jungle trails a mile or more from any village or house. Stealing is very uncommon in these regions and is severely punished if detected.[1] In the Pegu Hills near the Burmese the same security does not exist, and the paddy is stored within the village stockade.

[1] See pages 27, 148.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

243 The grain is carried in baskets on the backs of the beaters (see p. 94) and is poured slowly into the bin so as not to settle compactly. Should a basket slip and fall into the bin or its contents be dashed in, a fowl must be killed and an offering made. The storing of grain must be finished as speedily as possible; but if it can not be done in one day, the workers may rest over night.

The task of storing finished, they bring an offering for "Hpi Bi Yaw." [2] consisting of a clod of earth, a morsel of rice, and a small cup of liquor. These are placed on the paddy in the bin, and a prayer of thanksgiving is said to her. After these ceremonies the cultivator feels at liberty to take grain from his store and carry it home for food.

A small supply of paddy is always put aside in a special basket for seed, each family preserving its own, which is supposed to date back to a time when its forbears had an unusually good crop in some favorable year. Only in the last extremity will a Karen eat his seed-grain. There are many varieties of rice having their special names, each cherished by particular localities and families. Hill rice is greatly prized as being more delicious than plains rice.

244 The Karen raise different kinds of vegetables in their rice-fields, such as certain varieties of gourds, beans, yams, a kind of sweet potato, and peppers of various sorts, especially the red chili so generally used for condiment. Cotton is also grown in the fields along with the rice, standing until long after the paddy has been [462] reaped. The cotton is usually considered to be the women's crop. They tend it, gather the bolls, and carry them home. The other products of the field seem to belong to all members of a family alike. The tips of various plants are used for greens. These must be plucked with the fingers and not cut off with a sharp instrument, inasmuch as the spirits dislike their being dissevered with a knife. A few plants of cockscomb are grown in the field, the red variety ("hpaw ghaw") being preferred to the yellow, because they are supposed to dazzle the eyes of the demons and prevent their harming the crop. In the lower hills sesame is often raised for its seeds, which are threshed out and sold to the Burmese, who press the oil out of them. This is serviceable in cooking and lighting. It is said to be not unlike linseed oil in certain respects, but supplies a large amount of the fats required in curries.

245 In the Toungoo and Shwegyin Hills great quantities of betel-nuts are grown. These regions furnish, I believe, the greater part

[2] The divinity who presides over the cultivation of the paddy: see page 228.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Karen 4P7

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339. KARENS CUTTING THEIR CROP.

such an extent that they destroy whole crops and stocks of corn and produce famine. Towards harvest time birds have to be scared again. The rice crop is generally ripe before the last rains fall. A chance break is taken advantage of to cut, dry, and thresh the corn, which is got under cover in a bin on the *taungya*, or *punzo*, as it is called when done with. The secondary crops ripen later. Cucumbers, pumpkins, marrows, brinjals, and other coarse vegetables, and sometimes tomatoes, are sown on the margins and along the pathways. In a good season the Karéns get about double the quantity of grain they need for living. The whole of the secondary crop is for trade. In the moist ravines they cultivate the betel-palm and betel-vine, and they have taken to orange gardening at the foot of the hills. They also collect the wild betel-vine and honey by climbing high trees (No. 362); the tree-ladder is made by driving bamboo spikes into the wood. The only honey of Burma is wild; but bees frequent the limestone caves to such a degree that in some places the right to collect honey and wax in them is farmed out. Honey sells for ten annas and wax for two and a half rupees a viss. The staple food of the Karéns is rice. They make a curry in the Burman way; with it they eat *ngapi*, salt fish or fresh fish, or the flesh of pig and deer, especially the "small deer" they trap at the *taungya*. They keep goats, poultry and pigs, which latter are the scavengers of the villages. But the chief purpose for which these animals are bred is to be killed and offered to the *nats*, who have to be propitiated on all occasions. At every village site and clearing for cultivation a

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339. KAREN WOMAN COOKING.

343 thefts from /216/ the grain sheds are extremely
778 rare (22).

[171] 22. T.C. Hodson reports this about the Naga, The Naga Tribes of Manipur (London, 1911), p. 42, in conjunction with McCulloch.

342 The crudely built bamboo house (Plate VII, 2) has in front a veranda which is reached by a steep ladder; the roof extends over the former (23).

23. A short remark about the Karenni house by A. Fischer, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie /Journal for Ethnology/, Vol. 35 (1903), pp. 991 ff.; the typical veranda of the house which has been reproduced here is completely damaged.

The occupants remain here during the daytime, and here the women keep their weaver's looms and spinning equipment; sometimes one of those [534] large bronze drums (pasi), which the literature mentions so often hang here. They belong to the most highly prized possessions of the Karen, and represent a very substantial barter element for the purchase of wives and similar transactions. The interior of the house contains only one room. [354] In its center is the fireplace with a structure hanging over it. On a bamboo platform, which stands around the entire wall space, are dishes, baskets, etc. The sleeping accommodations, not separated from each other, are in the rear of the room. Ears of corn and millet spikes--the [273] latter are used as an ingredient in the brewing [251] of rice brandy, which plays an important part with all the mountain tribes and also the Shan-- hang from the roof rafters. In between, hang large pieces of pork.